

Thy Kingdom Come at Work

By Brian Dahl

Building a healthy work culture has been strongly linked to success in the workplace. Better culture fosters better organizations. As management consultant and author Peter Drucker famously stated: “Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

As a partner in a marketing agency, I’ve worked with many different types and sizes of client organizations—private/public, large/small, for-profit/non-profit. I have seen firsthand how our work experiences, and the results of our labor, are strongly shaped by organizational culture.

We had a decade-long relationship with a large consumer products company. Big brands run by accomplished individuals. It was exciting high-profile work serving some very smart marketers.

In working with this company, the expectations were clear: Performance was paramount. If you weren’t moving up, you would soon be moving out. The fruit of this performance focus was a culture of competition.

Another market leader we served during the same timeframe cultivated a different approach. Performance was expected, but with a clear sense of “us”

built into the way work was done. People shared the work—and the wins—as a team. This approach yielded a culture of collaboration.

Both companies delivered bottom line performance, but their cultures were very significantly different. As Christ-followers, how should we be cultivating culture?

God calls us to take the raw material he provides (people, talent, resources) and draw potential out of it for human flourishing. The standard for Christians is to work with a high degree of love, integrity, and excellence.

This mindset reflects a Kingdom culture. As stewards of God’s creation, we are to shine for Christ in order to point others toward him. This is why work culture matters to God and should matter to us.

Jesus taught and modeled how we are to cultivate a Kingdom culture in his ministry on Earth. His work was flawless. His integrity was above reproach. And his love and grace were unmatched.

During the Last Supper, he rebuked the disciples for their self-centered

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Fostering a Kingdom Culture

“Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.” (Matthew 13:8-9)

Culture making can be tied to horticulture, taking what nature offers and making something of it. God calls us to take the raw material he provides, draw potential out of it, and rearrange it for human flourishing as he defines.

Culture matters. Culture influences us for good or for bad. What is happening in the greater culture influences our workplace cultures. If we aren’t being proactive in influencing our cultures, they are influencing us.



All culture making is a form of gardening, where we get our hands dirty. This isn’t always easy, yet this is where our Lord calls each of us to labor.

We need to bring the gardener to work and the world around us. We are working for our Father; this means fostering the Kingdom of God wherever we are. His Kingdom is everlasting, and his dominion endures through all generations—even ours. (Psalm 145:13)

May Reflections: Pages 2-4

REFLECTIONS WEEK 1

Our Ultimate Goal

By Joe Peterson

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)

I often question my true priorities in life. When I was a young child, I always knew getting into Heaven was the ultimate goal. But as life goes on and priorities change, it’s amazing how quickly you lose sight of the most important milestone each of us can achieve. We fail to keep our eyes on Heaven as the primary reason we are here on Earth, and we get caught up in the day-to-day satisfactions of what we may call the “mini goals” of life—entertainment, money, success, and the like.

In Matthew 5, Jesus gives us clear direction on how to attain that ultimate goal of life—the Kingdom of Heaven. The path he points to is righteousness. But what is

righteousness? It’s simply being real. Being authentic. Not fake. And most importantly, it’s being real in our love of God, even in our places of work.

In my current workplace, practicing my Christian faith is strongly encouraged. Not through any specific job requirements, heavy-handed directives, or guilt-ridden suggestions, but more through behaviors and actions that are aligned with scripture.

In leadership meetings we often find ourselves reflecting on scripture, giving thanks to God for our many blessings, and asking for God’s direction as we go about our work. The result is a Kingdom culture—a workplace where the fruit of the spirit can take root and grow.

The impact of this environment and culture has encouraged me to take on a more consistent approach to my devotions. Each day begins with three reflections and corresponding prayers. In turn, this helps to ground me in what is truly important.

This practice has helped me be more empathetic and compassionate with my colleagues—and consequently

be more committed and engaged in supporting their efforts. It also takes away much of the anxiety that is often present when we worry too much about the “mini-goals” in life—and forget about our main goal of righteousness.

Joe Peterson is a partner and vice president of account services at DKY. He resides in St. Paul, Minnesota, with his wife and daughter.

PRAY

Lord of true righteousness, help me to be righteous. Help me to be sincere in all that I do and all that I seek at work, and in life. Help me to love you and to love you each and every moment of the day.

REFLECT

How do life’s “mini-goals” get in the way of your relationship with God?

DISCUSS

What could you do at work to ensure the Kingdom of Heaven is always the priority?

NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND

Our Annual Conference this fall will be a National Challenge Weekend in Arizona. It will mark our 40th year as a ministry. Details coming soon.



REFLECTIONS WEEK 2

Quiet Forbearance

By Tim Karlberg

But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Each of the virtues listed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 are evidence that the Holy Spirit is active in our lives. But one of these, in particular, has a striking way of setting apart believers in the workplace. Forbearance is something that can be practiced silently while speaking volumes about a person's character.

When I consider my career so far and my greatest periods of personal and professional growth, not one of them was easy, fun, or desirable. Like you, I can think of times when I went above and beyond only to have my hard work

overlooked and underappreciated. I can recall being the undeserving subject of a boss's fiery, short temper. And if I'm honest with myself, the instances where others—knowingly or not—took credit for my contributions, still sting.

Some of the most meaningful ways God has improved me as an employee—and a man—were born out of difficult and deeply-challenging experiences.

But those hard times in the workplace, on their own, aren't what this is about. It's our abandoning of pride and our willingness to quietly endure them that pleases God. When we suppress the desire to grumble at work, when we silence the inner voice that wants to give others a piece of our mind—these are moments of forbearance.

Tim Karlberg is director of digital marketing at DKY in Minneapolis,

Minnesota. Tim is very involved in helping us publish the Spark Workday Reflections.

PRAY

Lord, during the hard times at work, help me bear up under suffering, seek strength from your Spirit, and practice gratitude.

REFLECT

How has God used difficulties at work to help you grow as a follower of Christ?

DISCUSS

Share how God has used difficulties to help you grow in maturity and be a better witness to Christ at work.

REFLECTIONS WEEK 3

Choosing Joy

By Heidi Pfau

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. (Psalm 28:7)

In both my home life and work life, I'm blessed to be surrounded by many believers who have big servant hearts and adopt the fruit of the spirit, specifically kindness and joy.

A few years ago, we went through a tough season and lost a very important piece of business. It was a gut punch for the entire staff, and the impact was significant. For most (admittedly, me) the default feelings would have been beat up, disappointed, and angry. Instead, I witnessed many of my colleagues choose trust, gratitude, and joy.

When those hard situations come, we are called to persevere with an attitude of humility and cheer—especially when we don't feel like it. Cultivating joy at work happens over many small choices that add up. It makes a huge impact in our day-to-day interactions and relationships with those we work with and for.

There's a different kind of joy that comes with being a Christian. We know the goodness and grace of Christ. We have a purpose and serve a sovereign God who has a perfect plan. One of my favorite authors says, "We can endure each day—with joy—because we have Christ. That's how people can see we're different."

Heidi Pfau is an account supervisor at DKY in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She loves spending time with her husband and two young boys, gardening, and

landscaping during the beautiful Minnesota summer months.

PRAY

Thank you, Lord, that despite the unsettling situation in the world and our daily lives, we can choose hope and joy.

REFLECT

When I struggle at work, do I turn inward and feel sorry for myself? Or do I stop and remember the suffering of Christ for me and rejoice!

DISCUSS

In what ways do we adjust our perspective to feel and share more joy in each day?

REFLECTIONS WEEK 4

Goodness at Work

By Craig Claeys

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and goodness. (2 Peter 1:3)

In college, I decided to pursue a position as art director in a brand design firm, but not to pursue advertising agencies. I'd observed creative roles in ad agencies were often territorial, contributing to a dog-eat-dog culture.

Early on, a friend at an ad agency made me aware of an art director position and found the agency to be "an animal of a different stripe." Christian faith guided the priorities and decision-making of the agency partners. I have been here for over 20 years.

One thing I look to bring to my work is goodness. Goodness at work has two primary expressions: Excellence in the work and excellence in relationships. When the pressure is on and the work taxing, I have a choice to make. I strive to improve my craft and the quality of work. Good work brings honor to God.

I also seek to help build an environment that values human resources as more than a means to an end. In this way, I have the opportunity every day to reflect God's goodness through kindness and grace in my work relationships.

Working with devotion to Christ first is the key to cultivating an environment of goodness where people can thrive. I'm very grateful to be able to exercise the talents God has given me, and I'm thankful for the relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ I've worked alongside.

Over the years, I believe God has honored a culture of goodness at the agency and has allowed our client relationships and the team to grow.

Craig Claeys is a senior art director at DKY in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He enjoys time with his wife and adult children, and dabbles in music, cycling, soccer, and woodfire pizza making.

PRAY

Father, teach us to seek goodness for all, in every area of our work.

REFLECT

Are there areas of my work where I am delivering less than my best work? Am I an instrument of God's goodness?

DISCUSS

What trials and temptations cause me to turn inward and compromise my work and relationships?

PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

(Philippians 4:8)

Fostering a Kingdom Culture

WorkLight is a renewal of this ministry with the intention of reaching the next generation with this movement of the Holy Spirit. Our mission remains the same as it was

under Christians in Commerce: To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence.

What does Christian excellence look like in modern times? With a mission field of the marketplace, it is excellent to connect God and work. Sometimes quiet forbearance protects us from temptations to sin, and perhaps even draws others with us toward Jesus. By the grace of God, we have the freedom to pursue goodness at work and even choose to share in the joy of the Lord. At the same time, as Christians we look to the unseen and the beyond for the

ultimate goal of our efforts.

When each of us comes together in seeking Christ, the excellence produced generates a movement of the Holy Spirit. These are the building blocks of building God's Kingdom. It is our call to steward these divine gifts into a Kingdom Culture wherever we go.

So, what now? Consider bringing a mid-career igniter with you on a Challenge Weekend this year. Who has God placed in your heart to invite into this movement of the Holy Spirit?

With you in Christ,
Wes



Connecting God and Work

By Bill Dalgetty



The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work and take care of it. (Genesis 2:15)

How much do we connect our work with God? In a seminar on faith and work which I attended a few years ago, most of the people in my small group of 12 said that they never thought of their work as having anything to do with God or their faith.

Our increasingly secular culture would like to keep God and faith out of the workplace, but that was never God's intention. He created us in his image and likeness and expected us to "work and take care of" his garden of creation. Civilization is an extension of God's creation. Work is essential to sustain civilization.

So, how can we bring the Kingdom of God into our workplaces? St. Paul

eloquently describes an effective means. "Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

There is no law against love in the workplace! There is no employee handbook that can object to conduct exhibiting the characteristics enumerated above. What workplace can object to patience, kindness, humility, truth, and respect?

As Christians who have accepted God's offer to dwell in us, we take care of God's creation and build his Kingdom when we bring his presence into our work, seeking to bring his

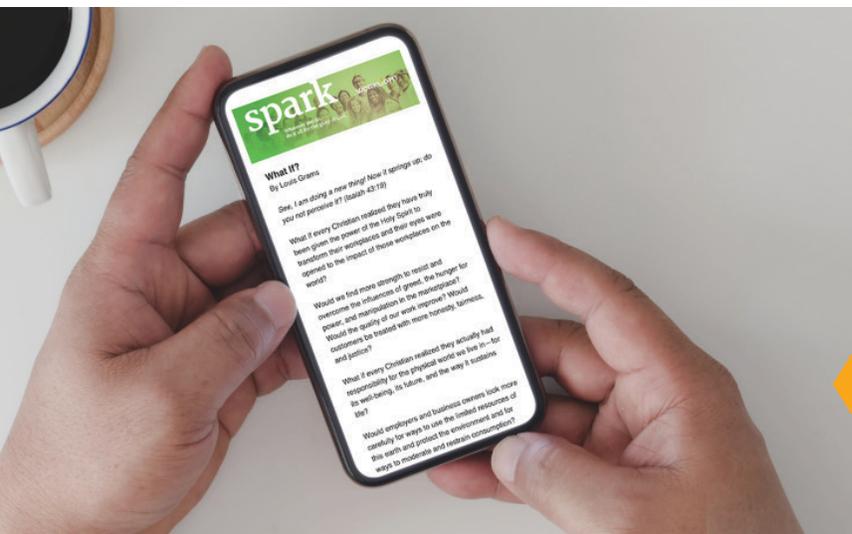
love, truth, and excellence to our jobs, and the people and circumstances of our workplaces. This is indeed the mission of WorkLight.

Our witness of Jesus is usually better accomplished with our conduct than with our words. Conduct establishes credibility and opens the door for the words to have more impact when the opportunity arises. If you want the opportunity to witness Christ with your words, witness first with your conduct. Hostility to Christians in the workplace is often a reaction when words come before establishing credibility with affirming conduct.

There was an executive in my company that when we were with other people and he learned of my affiliation with CIC, would mock my Christianity and proclaim Christians in Commerce an oxymoron. But when we were alone, he would ask me all kinds of questions about the Bible and God. He was searching for God, and because of the mutual respect built into our relationship over many years, God gave me the opportunity to plant some seeds.

How do you bring love, truth, and excellence to your workplace?

Adapted and used with permission from former President and Board Member Bill Dalgetty's weekly blog "Christ in Life and Work." Bill can be reached at dalgettybill@gmail.com.



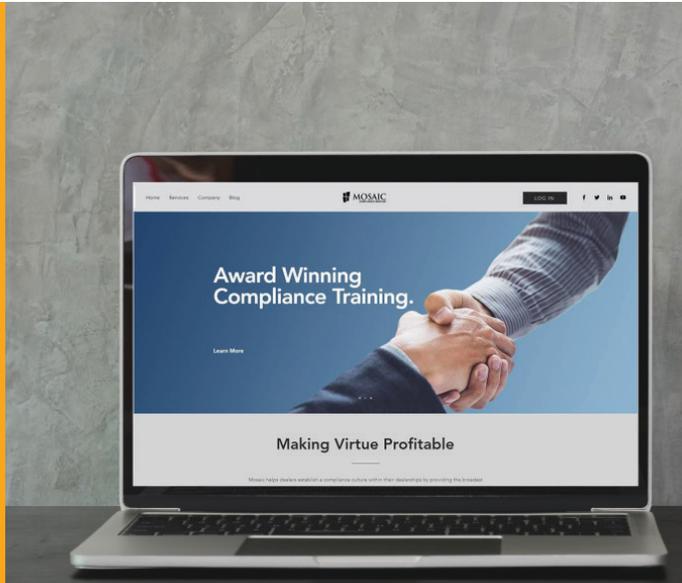
More Insights, New Stories

Rediscover The Spark Email Reflections. Additional, new stories and insights expand on the month's theme every workday morning. Encourage others to sign up.

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What Does the Father Want?

By James Ganther



Thy Kingdom Come at Work Continued from page 1

focus (Luke 22:24-32), calling them to excellence. He also modeled breathtaking love and humility by kneeling to wash their feet (John 13:4-9).

Culture influences our workplace for good and for bad. The Apostle Paul taught us how we can know when we are cultivating a good Kingdom culture at work: by the results—the fruit of our labor. When we cultivate a Kingdom culture, the fruit will be good.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Backing up a few verses in Galatians 5, we see a contrasting list of fruit. When we fail to cultivate in the power of the Holy Spirit, a harvest of rotten fruit is the result, including impurity, jealousy, selfish ambition, dissension, and factions.

When we reflect on these two lists it's plain to see God's good vision for a Kingdom culture, and how Christians can shine for Christ.

Our company is blessed to have many Christ-followers on staff. We are far from where we hope to be, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, we work together to cultivate a Kingdom culture.

The reflections in this edition of The Flame are provided by my colleagues. Each one focusing on one of the fruits of the spirit. May we not be passive in running the race set before us but let us shine bright for Christ.

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name. May your Kingdom come, and your will be done, in our hearts and workplaces. Amen!

“All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” (Matthew 19:20)

Over the course of a legal career spanning three decades, I've worked in a large law firm, small law firms, and been both a solo practitioner and in-house counsel. None of those roles allowed me the complete freedom to impact the marketplace for Christ as I desired. So, in 2006 I quit my in-house position and founded a company with the intention that it would be an outpost of the Kingdom of God.

And so, Mosaic Compliance Services was born. We provide legal compliance training and services to help car dealerships understand their legal obligations and treat their customers in an ethical manner—a noble cause. We have grown to be the industry leader.

Our work environment is excellent and conducive to Christian living. We pay our employees top of market salaries, provide outstanding benefits, permit flexible work schedules, and have two to four dogs in the office most days. We roast our own coffee. We pray at all of our staff meetings and say grace before the lunches where we mark our colleagues' birthdays. And all the while we're working to make the car-buying experience better for the American consumer. So, what's the problem?

We're an outpost of the Kingdom of God, and that's the problem—it's just an outpost. We created a great place to work that directly impacts 10 employees, but the wider world? Not so much. We're an internet-based company, so actual human interactions with others are not the norm.

Like the young man who had done things right his whole life but knew he was still falling short, I have to ask the Lord, “What do I still lack?” As I write this, I do not know the answer. I suspect it means not settling for running just an outpost, but to truly surrender the enterprise to what our Father wants it to be. That may mean growth from just an outpost to a city on a hill. And I suspect (fear?) it may involve designating more of our profits to our most important stakeholder: Our Father who inspired this enterprise in the first place.

After Jesus answered his question, the young man “went away sad.” Will I?

James Ganther grew up in Wisconsin but has lived in the Tampa, Florida, area since 1993. He and his wife, Melissa, have seven children and one grandchild, but would like more (grandchildren, that is). He can be reached at jganther@MosaicCS.com.

NEWS



MINISTRY FOCUS

Christians in Commerce was founded as a workplace ministry in 1983. With your support and the grace of God, WorkLight is reinvigorating the Challenge Weekend and storytelling to reach the next generation. From Challenge Weekends changing lives to direct encounters with Christ in the workplace, let us continue to build God’s Kingdom together. Come Holy Spirit!

NATIONAL GROWTH COUNCIL

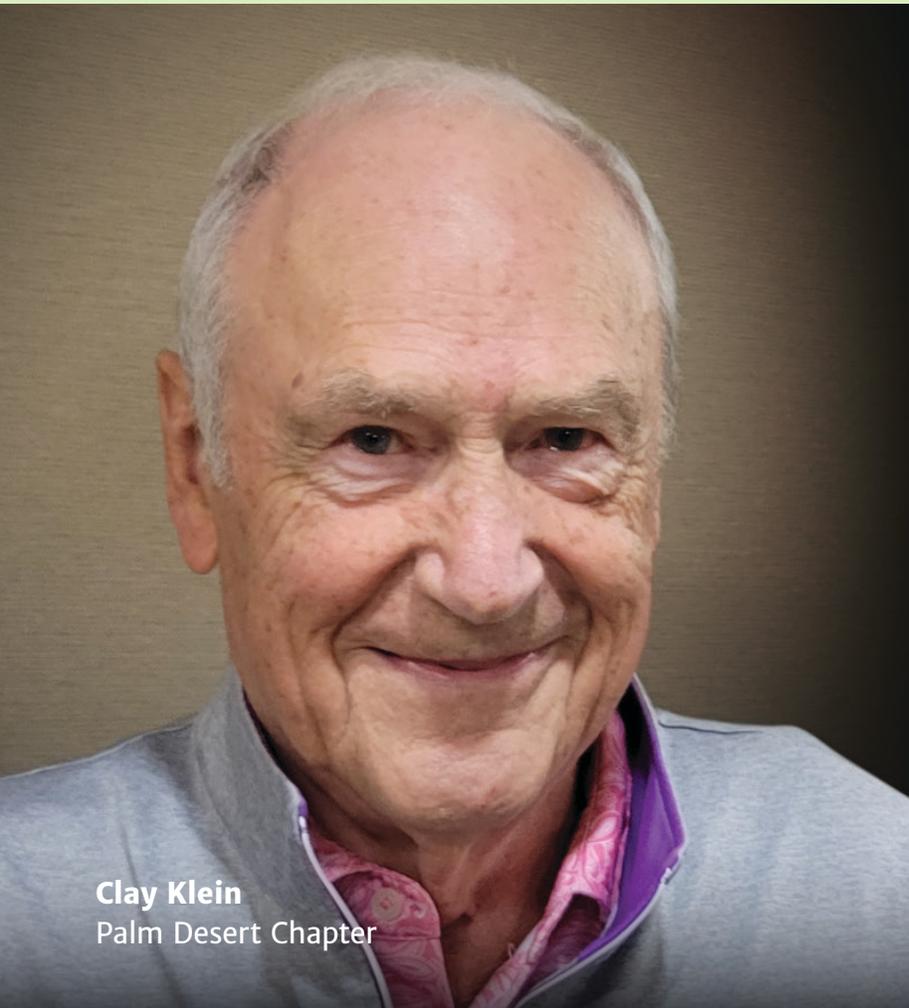
WorkLight’s National Growth Council continues meeting monthly with a focus on Igniter Challenge Weekends. As we move from learning to connecting to collaborating, we are closer than ever to discerning how God will bring 500 igniters onto Challenge Weekends by 2025.

NATIONAL CHALLENGE WEEKEND

Did you know that 2022 is the 40th year of our ministry? What better way to mark the occasion than hosting the first-ever National Challenge Weekend as our Annual Conference! Stay tuned for more information as we pray and plan for our largest-ever gathering this fall in Arizona.

GROUP COACHING

Did your Chapter or Small Group get to work with Dan Clites earlier this year? Whether you’re looking to continue or starting fresh, reach out to dan@worklight.org to request support.



TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD THE KINGDOM

WorkLight has given me the chance to connect with so many outstanding people, Christians who truly walk the walk without ceremony. Even though retired, we should continue supporting WorkLight so future generations can keep on living out their faith at work. I know, firsthand, how easy it is to make stewardship through estate planning a reality. I hope you will consider including WorkLight in your giving.

Clay Klein
Palm Desert Chapter

Learn more about legacy giving at
WorkLight.org/KingdomBuilder

2022**MAY**

*"I have been crucified
with Christ and I no
longer live, but Christ
lives in me."*

Galatians 2:20

**THE FLAME****WORKLIGHT PRAYER**

Father,

*Fill us with your Holy Spirit
that we may be made new
and bring the presence of Christ into all we do;
That we may grow in love for you, and for all;
That we may be humble and wise stewards of your creation;
That we may bring your light into our workplaces;
That we may lead all to unity in you;
Through Jesus, our Lord.*

Amen

VISION Being Christ in the workplace

MISSION To encourage and equip Christians to be God's presence in the workplace by the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising faith, integrity, and excellence

VALUES WorkLight is an ecumenical workplace ministry committed to:

- Growing and being transformed in Jesus Christ
- Working for our Father, 24/7, 365 days a year
- Building strong brotherhood and sisterhood
- Serving God and expanding his Kingdom in all aspects of our lives

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